

Message Text

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43

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 SCI-06 AID-20 DLOS-06 COA-02

EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /177 W

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R 121326Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5526

INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 3332

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, UY, AR

SUBJ: ARGENTINA-URUGUAY TERRITORIAL WATER DISPUTE

NEAR SOLUTION

CINCSO FOR POLAD

REF: MVD 3735; DAO IR-6-900-0163-72

1. SUMMARY. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, CONFIRMED BY KNOWLEDGEABLE FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCE, URUGUAY AND ARGENTINA ARE CLOSE TO REACHING AGREEMENT OVER TERRITORIAL WATER DISPUTE IN RIO DE LA PLATA AND ATLANTIC OEACN. MAJOR TRADE-OFF IN PROPOSED TREATY WOULD GUARANTEE TO ARGENTINA CONTROL OVER SHIP CHANNEL PROVIDING ACCESS TO BUENOS AIRES PORT AND WOULD ASSURE TO URUGUAY SUB-SURFACE EXPLORATION RIGHTS IN PROMISING PETROLEUM AREAS. URUGUAYAN FOREIGN MINISTRY HOPES TO BE ABLE TO SIGN AGREEMENT BEFORE END OF YEAR, BUT ONE POTENTIAL HOLDUP IS CONTINUING URUGUAYAN ARMY OPPOSITION TO TREATY PROVISION WHICH WOULD RECOGNIZE ARGZMTINE SOVEREIGNTY OVER MARTIN GARCIA ISLAND.

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END SUMMARY.

2. URUGUAY PRESS DURING LAST WEEK HAS CARRIED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE ALLEGING THAT TREATY SETTLEMENT TERRITORIAL WATER BOUNDARY DISPUTE BETWEEN ARGENTINA AND URUGUAY IS IMMINENT. PRESS ACCOUNTS CLAIM THAT TREATY WILL BE SIGNED BY PRESIDENTS PERON AND BORDABERRY PRIOR TO MID-DECEMBER. FOREIGN MINISTER BLANCO, IN NOVEMBER 6 PRESS INTERVIEW, "CONFIRMED" THAT TWO COUNTRIES INVOLVED IN CONVERSATIONS THAT ARE "VERY CONSTRUCTIVE AND VERY POSITIVE AND WHICH HAVE REACHED A HIGH LEVEL OF ADVANCEMENT." BLANCO, HOWEVER, CAUTIOUSLY REFUSED TO DISCUSS DETAILS OF AGREEMENT OR TIMING OF ANY VENITAL SIGNING.

3. KNOWLEDGEABLE, RELIABLE FONMIN SOURCE TOLD EMBOFF NOV 9 THAT LOCAL PRESS ACCOUNTS ARE ESSENTIALLY ACCURATE. NEGOTIATION OF 93-ARTICLE TREATY ON TERRITORIAL WATERS WAS COMPLETED BY ARGENTINE/URUGUAYAN FOREIGN MINISTRY AND NAVY AUTHORITIES APPROXIMATELY A MONTH AND A HALF AGO. MAJOR PROVISIONS OF NEGOTIATED TREATY INCLUDE DIVISION OF DISPUTED RIO DE LA PLATA WATERS ALONG MID-POINT BOUNDARY. DIVISION OF ATLANTIC OCEAN WATERS WOULD BE BY PERPENDICULAR LINE DRAWN FROM MID-POINT OF PUNTA DEL ESTE-CSGH SAN ANTONIO LINE. SIGNATORIES WOULD HAVE EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS TO EXPLOIT MINERAL RESOURCES AND FISHING ON THEIR RESPECTIVE SIDES OF MID-POINT LINE. THE TREATY, HOWEVER, CONTEMPLATES TWO MAJOR EXCEPTIONS TO XVD-POINT LINE PRINCIPLE:

A. ARTIFICAL SHIP CHANNELS WOULD BE UNDER THE CONTROL OF AND WOULD BE MAINTAINED BY THE COUNTRY WHICH CONSTRUCTED THEM. THIS PROVISION IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT TO ARGENTINA WHICH WOULD RETAIN CONTROL OVER INDIO CHANNEL (THE APPROACH TO BUENOS AIRES PORT) FOR THE ENWINGEY OF THE CHANNEL INCLUDING THOSE STRETCHES ON THE URUGUAYAN SIDE OF THE MID-POINT LINE. TREATY WOULD ALSO GUARANTEE RIGHT OF ALL SHIPS TO USE RIVER CHANNELS.

B. MARTIN GARCIA AND TIMOTEY DOMINGUEZ ISLANDS, DESPITE CONFIDENTIAL

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FACT THAT BOTH ISLANDS ARE ON URUGUAYAN SIDE OF MID-POINT LINE, WOULD BE DIVIDED BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WITH LARGER MARTIN GARCIA ISLAND GOING TO ARGENTINA. IN ORDER TO PLACATE NATIONALISTIC URUGUAYAN SENTIMENTS OVER LOSS OF MARTIN GARCIA, ARGENTINA WOULD GUARANTEE TO DEMILITARIZE ISLAND AND ISLAND WOULD BE SITE OF MIXED URUGUAYAN-ARGENTINE RIO DE LA PLATA COMMISSION WHERE FLAGS OF BOTH NATIONS WOULD FLY.

4. FONMIN SOURCE, IN CONFIDENCE, STATED THAT FINAL AGRDVMENT ON TREATY PRESENTLY HUNG UP BY OPPOSITION WITHIN URUGUAYAN ARMY TO ANY SETTLEMENT WHICH RENOUNCES URUGUAYAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER MARTIN GARCIA ISLAND. SOURCE EXPRESSED HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT URUGUAYAN INTEREST IN PROCEEDING WITH EARLY EXPLORATION OF PROMISING PETROLEUM DEPOSITS ON URUGUAYAN SIDE OF MID-POINT LINE WOULD CONVINCE ARMY TO CHANGE ITS POSITION AND ALLOW FOR SIGNING OF TREATY BEFOE END OF YEAR.

5. COMMENT: TREATY PROVIDES EACH SIGNATORY WITH MAJOR GAIN: ARGENTINA WITH ASSURED SHIPPING ACCESS TO PORT OF BUENOS AIRES AND URUGUAY WITH RECOGNIZED SOVEREIGNTY OVER PROMISING (BUT BY NO MEANS PROVEN) MINERAL AREA. ISSUE OF MARTIN GARCIA SO FAR, HOWEVER, REMAINS A THORNY PROBLEM

AND, AT THIS WRITING, AN UNRESOLVED ONE.
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